GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6044
ANSWERED ON:05.05.2003
WORLD COMMISSION REPORT ON DAMS
RAMSHETH THAKUR

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the World Commission on Dams (WCD) in its reportstated that the impact due to big dams are more negative than positive and have led to the impoverishment and sufferings of millions of people; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SMT. BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY)

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The findings of the WCD are based on a limited knowledge base conveniently ignoring the all round development brought about by large water resources projects. It has ignored the contribution made by the irrigation and multipurpose projects in ushering the green revolution in the country and making India self sufficient in foodgrains and meeting fifteen per cent of the total energy needs of the country though hydropower, which is the cheapest and most sustainable source.

The assessment of the performance and development effectiveness of big dams made by the WCD in its report is based on a limited number of case studies conveniently chosen to draw preconceived conclusions. It is not a true representative of the ground realities as a number of success stories of big dams have been conveniently ignored. Options of development are either not explored or their efficacy itself is not time tested. The recommendations of WCD for planning, implementation and operation of dams are utopian in nature and are incompatible with our national development imperatives.